Home Fire Prevention and Preparedness

Topics of Discussion

- Smoke Detectors
- Fire Extinguishers
- Flammables
- Electrical Safety and Heat Sources
- Escaping a Fire

Smoke Detectors

- One is definitely NOT enough!
- Ensure that your smoke detectors are tested monthly and batteries are replaced twice a year.
- Encourage children to help test the smoke detectors. Familiarize them with the sounds of the alarm(s).

Fire Extinguishers

- Keep an all-purpose fire extinguisher in your kitchen.
- It's a good idea to keep fire extinguishers near the furnace, garage, and anywhere else a fire may start.
- Make sure every able-bodied member of the family is trained and familiar with the proper way to use the fire extinguishers.
- If you must use an extinguisher, make sure you have a clear way out in the event you can't put out the fire.

Flammables

- Keep matches, lighters and candles out of reach and out of sight of children!
- Smoking is dangerous! No one should ever smoke in bed.
- Avoid grease build-up in the kitchen and on appliances. Cooking fires are common. Don't leave food cooking on stovetops unattended.
- If a fire should occur, suffocate it with a pot/pan lid or a cookie sheet, or close the oven door.

Flammables

- Around the holidays, Christmas trees are a primary concern. Consider using an artificial tree that is labeled "flame resistant." If you do use an evergreen, water it daily to keep it from drying out.
- Dispose of materials from fireplaces and grills in non-flammable containers.
- Never put children to sleep in "day" clothes. Fire-retardant sleepwear can make a difference in burn outcomes.

Electrical Safety and Heat Sources

- Make sure your electrical system is not being over-taxed. This can cause a fire.
- Inspect wires. If you find any worn or exposed wiring from appliances, discontinue their use immediately!
- Space heaters can be dangerous if not used correctly. Make sure yours will automatically shut off if tipped over.
- Chimney fires are common. Have your chimney inspected and cleaned annually.
- Keep appliances unplugged when not in use.

Escaping a Fire

- Keep doors shut while sleeping. If you think there is a fire, feel the door and knob for heat before opening.
- Have an escape route for each area of the home and a designated meeting place outside.
- Draw a map -- one that's easy for all members of the family and visitors to understand.
- When planning for a family with young children, be sure to teach them not to hide from fire or smoke and to go to firefighters who are there to help them.

Escaping a Fire

- All children should be familiar with the ideas of "crawling underneath the smoke" to escape a fire. "Stop, drop and roll" is another safety principle that must be ingrained into children's minds.
- Multi-storied buildings are of special concern.
- Make sure every sleeping room has two means of escape in the event of a fire.
- Everyone must understand that once you escape, you must never reenter a burning building -- no matter what you might have left behind.

Escaping a Fire

- Call emergency responders (911) from a neighbor's house.
- Make sure to practice your escape plan periodically.
- Young children should know their street address and last name (and, of course, how to dial 911).
- After you've planned for the family, don't forget the pets.

Review

- Smoke Detectors
- Fire Extinguishers
- Flammables
- Electrical Safety and Heat Sources
- Escaping a Fire

Next Steps

- Take this information home with you.
- Teach your family where the fire extinguisher are and how to use them.
- Teach your family about fire prevention.
- Develop and practice a fire drill at home.

Questions???